

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

After paragraph [0012], insert the following new paragraphs:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

The Figure is a schematic illustration of a method according to an example, non-limiting embodiment of the present invention.

Please replace paragraph [0014] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0014] This reference voltage source may produce three voltage levels, which are made available to evaluation electronics with reference to the Figure, the lowest level 3 and the central level 2 define a window in which all the capacitors must be after a fault-free charging process. The highest level 1 defines a protection threshold.

Please replace paragraph [0015] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0015] With reference to the voltage curve 4 in the Figure, Overshooting of this highest level 1 (e.g., at segments 5 of the voltage curve 4) may be an indication of a fault. The fault may be indicated visually. It is also possible to use a bus system to inform an evaluation unit of the fault, thus allowing immediate diagnosis of which capacitor has failed. Suitable voltage values for the individual voltage levels are 2.2 V for the lowest voltage level 3, 2.45 V for the central voltage level 2 and 2.7 V for the highest voltage level 1.

Please replace paragraph [0017] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0017] By way of example, a fault in the capacitor is indicated when the gradient of the voltage on the capacitor during the charging of the capacitor exceeds a limit value (e.g. at segment 6 of the voltage curve 4). This advantageously provides additional capability for identifying a defective capacitor.

Please replace paragraph [0018] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0018] The voltage levels 1,2,3 may be supplied, for example via optocouplers, to an evaluation device. This transmission method is particularly reliable.

Please replace paragraph [0023] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0023] After charging the capacitors, normal operation is started for one capacitor, for example, when the capacitor voltage 4 reaches the lowest voltage level 3 and has not yet reached the central voltage level 2 (e.g. at segment 7 of the voltage curve 4). A balancing operation may start when the capacitor voltage has reached the central voltage level 2, and may end when the capacitor voltage has once again reached the lowest voltage level 3. When the lowest voltage level 3 is reached once again, normal operation is started again. A fault is indicated on reaching the highest voltage level 1. This can be initiated by a defective capacitor. These individual method steps ensure optimum balancing and fault indication.

Please replace paragraph [0024] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0024] In order to start balancing operation, the capacitor voltages of all the capacitors are raised above the central voltage level 2.

Please replace paragraph [0034] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0034] Advantageously, balancing may be carried out only when it is no longer possible to keep the capacitor voltages of all the capacitors between the two lower voltage levels 2, 3 (e.g., at segments 8 of the voltage curve 4).